

Testimony from State Representative Anthony G. Forlini (District 24)  
Before the House Committee on Families, Children and Seniors  
Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Good morning members of the House Committee on Families, Children and Seniors. I would like to thank you for conducting this hearing on legislation that would address issues with the use of bridge cards issued by the Michigan Department of Human Services.

As a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, I serve on the Subcommittee for Human Services. In working with DHS, we have learned of many ways in which residents may attempt to defraud public assistance programs.

The issuance of bridge cards has made food purchases convenient for families receiving food assistance. However, retailers should be able to identify that a bridge card is being used.

Unfortunately, some public assistance recipients have chosen to disguise their bridge cards by placing stickers over the front of the card. Attached to this testimony are some stickers actually advertised on-line at [www.bridgecardsticker.com](http://www.bridgecardsticker.com).

People should not be disguising their Bridge Card. While some argue it removes the stigma of using the card, in reality this is a fraud issue. People who qualify for food assistance programs are supposed to be using their bridge cards for basic family nutrition needs. In the event that bridge card holders are making unusual or prohibited purchases, it should be clear to the sales clerk.

If the bridge card was disguised, a clerk would be less likely to notice that such a purchase was made by an individual other than the person named on the card. This could be a sign of fraudulent activity by someone who purchased a card from a food assistance recipient.

When we receive a visa or mastercard, we do not alter these cards. After these cards are issued by a company, you wouldn't cover up your name and number on these card on their face. It makes no sense to cover up names and numbers on bridge cards either.

I am pleased to present House Bill 4720, which would prohibit altering or disguising a bridge card. Misrepresenting the card to the public is wrong and needs to be corrected.

We are still working out potential penalties for disguising a bridge card with DHS that would be permissible under federal law. In the meantime, HB 4720 sends a clear message to bridge card holders that these cards should not be altered for aesthetic or fraudulent purposes. Bridge cards are not a personal credit card. Bridge cards are government funded cards that come with a responsibility to be used properly.

I am here today asking for your support for HB 4720 as part of our efforts to ensure the integrity of food assistance program funds. Thank you for attention to this important issue. I think we can all agree that ongoing fraud is compromising the program. By us taking these steps outlined today, we can assure that those who truly need the bridge card will have access to it.

## Product Detail

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### **Features Of Our Stickers:**

Our premium vinyl stickers are durable and made with earth-friendly materials and a mild adhesive. The benefits we have strived for allow you, our valued customer, to:

- **Pay With Pride At Check-Out. We understand that paying with your Bridge Card can be embarrassing for you and have created a solution for this issue. There is no need to Check-Out-Quick!**
- **Our Mild Adhesive allows you to apply and re-apply the sticker in order to achieve an exact fit over your card.**
- **Our Stickers Do Not Effect The Way Your Card Works. The Sticker on top still allows the card to be swiped through the terminal (it's not too thick). Also, since the Sticker is on top, the magnetic strip on the back of the card is not impacted.**
- **We have strived to give You a high, quality product at a reasonable price. Have a Stress-Free Check-Out That You Deserve.**

### **In Addition To Your Bridge Card, Our Stickers Can Also Be Used For:**

- Gym Cards, ID Cards, Medical Cards, Transportation Cards, Bank Cards
- General Decorations - Our Removable vinyl stickers allow you to place them on a variety of items.



Bridge  
Card

5077 1190 0000 0054

CHANGE THE LOOK OF THIS CARD!



ISN'T THIS A BETTER LOOK?

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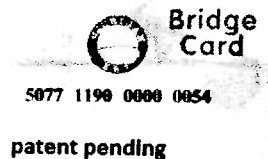
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### Change The Look Of Your Bridge Card



- With Our Custom Stickers
- Apply One Over Your Current Card

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### Into A New Designer Card

- These **ARE** Actual Bridge Cards With Our Stickers Applied Over Them.
- They Are Easy-To-Appl Over Your Card For An Exact Fit.

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### Design Your Own Card



- Have Your Bridge Card Reflect Your Personality.
- Choose From Our Designs - Or, Send Us Your Own.
- Choose A Full-Size Or Window-Cut Style.

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### Send Us Your Own Design

- Can't Find What You Want In Our Catalog?
- Do You Have A Favorite Picture? Then Put It On Your Card.
- Send Us Your Image And We'll Take Care Of The Rest.

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